

HERE and THERE

A Seeker After New Routes : The British-built Aeroncas : Johannesburg Race Helpers

Mr. Chichester Slips In

MR. FRANCIS CHICHESTER, an English enthusiast resident in New Zealand, has a habit of very unostentatiously slipping away in small aeroplanes, flying them *via* the Back of Beyond, and returning to civilisation, equally unostentatiously, months later. He then proceeds to write immensely entertaining books about his experiences.

Last week he dropped into England in typically unheralded fashion, having flown in a Puss Moth from Sydney, which he left last June. His route was to have been *via* Manchukuo and Siberia, but, as was to be expected, he found constant difficulty in obtaining permission to fly over various areas. The U.S.S.R., apparently, even went to the extent of making a new law for his "benefit."

Mr. Chichester and his passenger, Mr. F. D. Herrick, a 62-year-old sheep farmer, were forced to turn back through Indo-China, and to proceed north by the more orthodox route. Even then they were arrested in Persia! At Baghdad, Mr. Herrick was unlucky enough to stumble against the Puss Moth's revolving airscrew, but was fit enough to proceed after four days.

Progress at Peterborough

THINGS have been moving very rapidly at the Aeronautical Corporation factory at Walton, Peterborough, during the past four months. An initial batch of English Aeroncas is now going through—though there is delay in the matter of engine delivery—and the first machine has already been to Martlesham.

Only those minor modifications necessary for a British C. of A. have been made to the American version, but an enormous lot of work has been necessary in the production of special drawings. The wing structure has been strengthened and the undercarriage redesigned to suit the available material.

Everything, as a matter of fact, but the engine and specialised fittings are being made at Peterborough, and the process of manufacture and assembly is being carried out on mass-production lines, as far as possible, in order to reduce costs. Since each worker concentrates on the single job for which he or she has been carefully trained, it is only necessary to use a certain number of key men in order to guarantee standards of general workmanship and assembly. Naturally enough, the Aeronca has a type of structure which makes such methods possible.

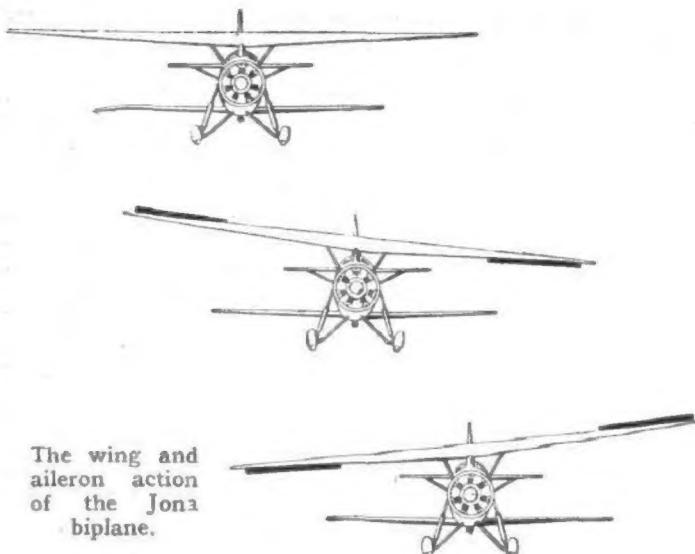
Modifications to the original factory are still going on day by day, but even now the initial rate of production of seven machines a week should be possible. A small aerodrome has been laid out on the other side of the adjoining railway and from here the assembled machines are now being flown. This cannot be used for test and demonstration flying, since it is within a mile or so of the Service aerodrome at Peterborough, but the company is laying down its own aerodrome at Whittlesey on the south side of the city and this should be ready for use within a very few months.

Equally remarkable is the way in which the Lang airscrew section of the same works is progressing. Dozens of airscrews, from ultra-lightweight to "air liner" size, were lying on one side awaiting their final covering and varnishing when we visited the factory last week, and almost as great a number of crude "sandwiches" were being planed down.

The "Popular" Angle

The Modern Book of Aeroplanes, by H. W. McCormick. A. C. Black, Ltd., Soho Square, London, W.1. Price 5s.

IN this book, of interest to both young and old, the editor of *The Meccano Magazine* touches lightly but thoroughly on all popular flying interests; and although the title is *The Modern Book of Aeroplanes*, there are included chapters on balloons, airships, war-time aeroplanes, Autogiros, airways of the world, famous flights, and wireless and direction-finding. Forty-six large photogravure illustrations exemplify the subjects treated, while the descriptions, in simple terms, enable more than the usual modicum of data to be introduced in an interesting manner to the non-technical mind.



The wing and aileron action of the Jona biplane.

The Jona Biplane

NEWSREEL pictures seen in London last week suggested that a considerable degree of success has been obtained with the novel Italian Jona biplane, which was described in *Flight* a year ago.

The machine is claimed to have automatic lateral stability, obtained by a rather startlingly unorthodox scheme. Briefly, the Jona system involves pivoting the upper wing of the biplane (or, rather, sesquiplane, the lower wing being of fairly short span) along a longitudinal axis placed parallel with the chord at mid-span, leaving the wing free to rock around this axis. The aileron controls are connected in such a way that, when a wing tip rises, the aileron on that side is raised and the aileron on the opposite side lowered to restore the wing to its symmetrical position with reference to the fuselage.

Reduction at Croydon

SURREY Flying Services, of Croydon, after an exceptionally busy season, have announced a reduction in dual and solo flying rates for "A" licence aspirants. These are now £3 and £2 15s. respectively, instead of £3 10s. and £3.

Johannesburg Race Echo

SOME interesting sidelights on the valuable assistance given by Government officials and others during the Johannesburg Race are contained in a letter which Dr. M. A. Zahra, secretary-general of the Royal Aero Club of Egypt, has written to Comdr. Harold Perrin, secretary of the Royal Aero Club.

After explaining in some detail his theory that many of the retirements were due to the fact that competitors were unduly trying both themselves and their machines by aiming for the speed prize, Dr. Zahra suggests that:

"If the prizes had been confined only to the handicap race, and the handicap times had not previously been known to the competitors, it is very likely that the pilots would have concentrated on showing their machines and themselves to the best advantage. It seems to me fairly certain that better results would then have been obtained, particularly if a condition of rest for a couple of hours had been imposed at the Cairo control, which would also allow for any desirable readjustment for hot climate."

"The above considerations seemed to me fairly clear at Cairo. All arrangements had been made for the pilots' comfort, but none of them seemed inclined to avail themselves of the opportunity or to want to stay a minute longer than the time taken for refuelling, which was done as arranged as quickly as possible."

"This brings me to the second subject. The Royal Aero Club of Egypt, in undertaking the control in Cairo, developed such an extensive organisation as not only to ensure all possible needs and facilities for pilots and aircraft in Cairo, but also to follow their progress and ascertain their location during their flight in Europe and in Africa as far down as the Sudan."

"For this purpose it formed from among its members a committee of the leading men of aviation in Cairo,